THE BUDDHIST RAY

"HAIL TO THEE, PEARL, HIDDEN IN THE LOTUS!"

VOL. III.] SANTA CRUZ, CAL., U. S. A., MAY, 1890. [NO. 5.

NEW MOVEMENTS.

REVERENCE for established formulæ, laws and orders does not seem to be a virtue or weakness with all our citizens. And our descent from a common Noah or pithecus does not seem highly probable. We judge so from the existence of movements like following, among us:

—CO-OPERATION. Societies for co-operation have been formed in several states; the members of which hold that the present social anarchy can be done away with by the co-operative production of the necessaries of life, and by the removal of middle-men and usurers.

—THE SINGLE TAX. The advocates of the single tax system propose to do away with the hell of involuntary poverty by the abolishment of taxes on improvements and industries and to retain but one tax–that upon land; which they say would be more than sufficient to pay all the expenses of the state.

—NATIONALISM. The nationalists propose the abolishment of private ownership of property and land; the transference of everything to the state; the organization of the state upon the family principle; the extension of equal educational facilities to all; the extinction of competition; the subordination of private interest to public, etc., etc.

—THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY. Formed by thibetan buddhist Arhats, with madam Blavatsky and colonel Olcott as visible heads and mediums. Motto: "A Universal Brotherhood." It ignores race, color, caste and creed; teaches the doctrines of karma, re-incarnation, spiritual evolution, and auto-salvation; and advocates the surrender of self for the good of humanity.

—ANARCHISM.—A german importation.—As every appeal to priest, monopolist and politician or ruler, for the amelioration of the condition of the laboring class, has, for ages, been an appeal to "deaf devils," there remains but two things to be done, namely: 1. utterly to destroy them by fire, sword, gun, or dynamite; and then, 2. to inaugurate a new social order and life by an equal distribution of the wealth of the nation.

FAITHISM.—A spiritistic sect.—To appeal to butchers, distillers, tobacco-chewers, usurers, politicians, "et hoc genus omne," for the betterment of society is to appeal to the "devil and his angels." A new state of society requires *a new race of men*, and this can be had only through a new education and life. The faithists pick up cast-aways, and appeal to christian and non-christian women that contemplate the murder of their unborn or newborn babes, to spare them for this purpose. They bring up these castaways strict vegetarians and abstainers from alcohol and tobacco, and according to the faithist religion; and then place them on the "Children's Land" in New Mexico, where they are to form a nucleus of a new race.

To say that these and all other new ideas and movements, good and bad, meet with violent opposition is hardly necessary.

THE BUDDHIST RAY.
A MONTHLY MAGAZINE.
DEVOTED TO BUDDHISM IN GENERAL, AND TO THE BUDDHISM IN SWEDENBORG IN PARTICULAR.

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"THIS ANCIENT ONE [THE BUDDHA] IS OUR ANGEL, WHOM WE REVERE AND OBEY."—SWEDENBORG.

DR M. D. Conway enlightens the readers of the *Open Court* by telling them that the BUDDHA taught the doctrine of pessimism! In the *North American Review*, May 1885, prof. F. Max Muller states that He taught *a life of charity*. The learned Oxford professor and the erratic ex-preacher, it seems, do not agree.

—"Is the christian religion a failure?"—is a question raised by the *Christian Union;* which says that the daily newspapers are inclined to answer the question in the affirmative. Ah, the godless newspapers; have they any ground for this answer!

—A writer in the Pittsburgh *Dispatch* says that the religion of the ancient chibchas indians in the columbian Andes, was a mixture of ancient buddhism and modern theosophy, and that it included no sanguinary sacrifices like those that marked the rituals of many of the neighboring tribes of Central and South America.

—OUR friends of the *Flaming Sword*, the koreshanites, quote capt. Pfoundes' words in the last RAY, and say that "the modern atheistic propagandists of buddhism want to supplant judaism and its offspring christianism;" and also the jewish-christian gods. Now, friends in the hollow globe, let us tell you something: the buddhists care no more for judaism and its offspring than for two rotten eggs. They ask a hearing only of those that are sick of both!

—A drug-store in this city has had on exhibition a large photograph of the wonderful image of our LORD at Kamakura, Japan, with the superscription: "A Japanese Bronze Idol,"—which indicates a sound knowledge of comparative religion! On the lap and hands of the "idol" are perched half a dozen profane asses—probably from America; who, it is likely, in western fashion, spat tobacco-juice all over the "idol" while the likenesses of their disgusting selves were taken. We would thank our co-religionists in Japan if they would put a stop to the desecration of this antique and sacred piece of art. If any one in this country were to climb up on a statue, were it even that of the vilest politician, to have his likeness taken, he would forthwith be pulled down, arrested and punished. This is not the first time we see this glorious image desecrated by perching asses, but we hope it will be the last.

—A writer in the *Popular Science Monthly*, for January, discusses the subject of "Public Schools and Crime." He quotes from the "Proceedings of the National Prison Association," 1888, the following statement: "*It is a fearful fact that a large proportion of our prison population is of the educated class.*" (The italics are his.) We discovered this just thirty years ago. And we have heard a highly educated man remark: "In spite of the huge din and bawl in their favor, I wish I had never been inside a public school or college. I learnt both Bible and Science there; everything, in fact, except,—*humanity!* And this, more than all else, I needed to learn." The writer in the *Monthly* makes another paradoxical statement, when he says: "The lowest races, the papuan islanders, the veddahs, the dyaks of Borneo, the fuegians, and other barbarous races which in the absence of rulers and organized societies, with no learning and but little acquaintance with even the rude arts of many primitive people, have developed the highest degree of tribal piety, integrity, chastity, and regard for covenants almost unknown to civilized man." So far the writer. And, now, friends, what are you going to do about it: teach your children the Law of Cause and Effect [Karma], or jewish fables?

SWEDENBORG ON DHYANA.

A Conversation written down for the RAY by
H. OSCAREWITCH.

CHRISTIAN (of the new-church sect.)—I have always understood that, if a man loves the Lord Jesus Christ, reads the bible, and goes to church, he can without hurt, enjoy the pleasures of the world and the flesh, and needs not for salvation, lead the sad and wearisome life of a buddhist ascetic: a life of poverty, seclusion and continence.

BUDDHIST.—If that creed elevates him out of this nethermost abyss, certainly he needs not. It jumps with my carnal man's humor, but not with that of my spiritual-man's: for he is not a lotus-eater. Swedenborg taught that our life has two sides: a truly happy and a truly unhappy (D. 439; 445); or, with the thibetan buddhists, that there is a right-hand and a left-hand "path" (A. 3477). The souls in the right-hand "path" look *inward*—to the Divinity—for salvation; those in the left, *outward*—to priests, churches, bibles and gods. These look to the circumference of life, those, to the centre. Do you take in my meaning?

C. Partly; but, proceed.

B. In the circumference is the world with its Vanity Fair, its riches...

C. But riches enable us to perform good uses to our neighboor.

B. Yes; and so does poverty. They also enable us to delude ourselves and others.

The possession of goods in the world is nothing else than imaginary (D. 2037),

says our swedish yogi. We buddhists call them *maya*, delusion, because they hell us with cares and avocate us from PEACE. Created by desire, they create in their turn desire, which ends in sorrow....

C. And joy!

B. Yes;—first, Desire; then, joy; and lastly, sorrow. Is the pleasure worth the penalty? What does your Swedenborg think of these joys?

Corporeal and worldly joys are worthless, foul, putrescent, and the like.—D. 1990.

C. What particular joys do you have in mind?

B. Those that tickle the senses, as; church-going....

C. What! How does church-going tickle the senses?

B. By music, singing, decorations, vestments, bread and wine, toilets, salvation-by-the-Lord; in a word, by glib, pious talk, devout goggle and the honeyedness of idolatry, it does so. Which is the reason, I imagine, why Swedenborg, though a bishop's son, went unoften to church. The church, be it protestant or popish, is a theatric affair: the shepherds are the play-actors; the sheep, the play-goers,—the hedonists. Swedenborg describes persons that love theatricals as "men of an external life."—D. 1882.

C. Are, then, all pleasures sinful and interdicted?

B. Not one! If you enjoy those of the left "path", they are yours, and if those of the right, they are yours. Do you seriously believe that, save the joys of the world, there are no joys? If so, you have been mistaught. I knew once an ascetic, who had formerly tasted the joys of the world, and he told me that, in comparison with his joys, those of the world were, as our swede says, "putrescent." And I understand that the ascetics of the higher orders experience joys greater than his. It is non-sane to assume that sensuous joys are the only possible.

C. What characterizes the supersensuous joys?

B. The peace and innocence in them.

C. Give me to feel or see some of them.

B. I cannot: for they "can be perceived and known only by a spiritual idea, and by those that are in them," says your illuminee.—D. 2128. Introspection, or, as we buddhists term it, *dhyana*, will show you their nature. Nothing else.

C. Am I to understand that sensuous joys contribute nought to salvation?

B. No; you are not! For, by alluring you to themselves, giving transitory pleasure, then girds and twinges, and often atrocious pangs, they are main to your salvation. You know why a "burnt child shuns the fire."

Souls [Egos] must through sufferings divest themselves of whatever is not in balance (D. 3168),

says Swedenborg. When we gravitate to the outsides of our nature,—become centrifugal instead of centripetal,—are we, think you, balanced or over-balanced?

C. Unbalanced, I should say!

B. Truly! We are like a pendulum which swings to the extreme of one side and fastens there. Some time in eternity our Ego swung out from the Divinity, if I may so say, but not for to fasten in these earthly states,—heaven, hell and the world of spirits,—but to acquire color, or Mind, and then to swing back. How are we to swing back?

C. By looking to the Lord.

B. That is, by mummery and idolatry; for "looking to the Lord," as, in common with the other sectarists, you of the new church, do, means nothing else. But your teacher, Swedenborg, did otherwise. In buddhistic fashion, and in imitation of his thibetan Masters, he practiced *dhyana* and *samadhi*, that is, meditation, abstraction, or introspection and psychic trance. And this enabled him, from experience, to write,—

When a man is withdrawn from the sensual things that are of the body, he is elevated into the light of the Spirit.—A. 10099.

When a man is uplifted toward Interior things, from a gross sensual lumen he comes into a milder lumen, and is, at the same time, withdrawn from the inflow of filthy and scandalous things [from without], and is drawn nearer to those things which belong to [the] justness and fairness [of the Spirit].—A. 6313.

I could give a hundred instances from his writings to show that Swedenborg practiced *dhyana*. Can you give me one instance of a preacher or a layman of the new-church sect imitating him?

C. I can not. All of us look to the Lord.

B. And yet, unless you learn to "think abstractedly from material things," or practice *dhyana*, you "cannot comprehend the essence of things." —A. 9407.

As soon as the Mind departs from bodily things, those of the Soul become evident.—A. 1408.

The communication of Heaven is with the Inward man, WHEN HE CAN BE WITHDRAWN FROM THE BODY.—A. 9396.

Spiritual matters reside in the Inmost man.—M. 130.

Which is more likely: that the Inmost can be reached by church-going and bible-reading, or by *dhyana*?

C. But we are taught that,—

"Hell is not in one place only, but everywhere; as also Heaven, yea, the Heavens; and God-Messiah himself.—D. 318.

How then can we err in looking outward instead of inward?

B. It glads me to hear that you are familiar with that pantheistic doctrine of Swedenborg; which finely shows that, inasmuch as the hells, the heavens and the Divinity itself, are neither here nor there, the former being states of mind, and the latter the Essential Nature of every manifestation in the universe, your new-church christianism is a huddle of ideas and a heathenish idolatry: for your postmortem hells and heavens have locality, and your gods (Jehovah and Jesus) are persons. That,—

The Lord is a Spiritual IDEA (D. 3314½),

you do not take in. You try, with atrocious botchery, to describe the Indescribable and to qualify the Unknown.

OM AMITAYA! Measure not with words
Th' immeasurable: nor sink the string of thought
Into the fathomless. Who asks doth err,
Who answers, errs. Say nought!

By charity and self-introspection we buddhists seek to deliver ourselves from this and every other hell of matter and heaven of delusion: and deliverance from these means obtainment of NIRVANA.

C. For over sixteen years have I belonged to the new-church [sect]. I have heard and read hundreds of sermons, but have never yet heard these doctrines mentioned, nor BUDDHA, nor NIRVANA.

B. Of course, not! As the prime object of sermons is to incloud and to suppress the truth, and to conceal the preacher's ignorance, it is but natural that you should not have heard any. Principles of the last importance are never discussed in the pulpit. Swedenborg met the thibetan Ascetics on the higher "planes." On these, nei-

ther swedish, nor latin, nor sanskrit, nor thibetan, are spoken, but a pasilaly. Wherefore it is plain that the sanskrit terms, BUDDHA and NIRVANA, could not appear in his writings, and that he had to use latin terms, as nearly as possible clothing the ideas of this pasilaly. And so, for BUDDHA we have *Dominus*, the lord; *Deus*, the god; *Antiquus*, the ancient one, etc.; and for NIRVANA we have, *Pax*, the peace, *Statuum innocentiæ*, the state of innocence, *Nil*, the no-thing, etc.

It was Swedenborg's desire to reach the PEACE or the NO-THING; that state which is untouched by the audible, visible and sensible of our animal and physical natures. He desired, as he put it, "to become 'nothing' in order to become 'something'", and, in a truly buddhistic spirit, he said that a "man should lose all that is his own; that is, his Desires and iniquities," to become "nothing".—D. 2043—44.

This NO-THING (NIL) is really of prime moment.—D. 1921.

C. But all men cannot become ascetics.

B. That is a truism. All men cannot become lettered; all horses cannot become race-horses; all meteorites cannot become suns. All idle truisms! For, only the spiritual optimacy of mankind, can, at present, become such. The swine-eating sectarists of your "New Jerusalem" cannot practice *dhyana*, but Swedenborg could and did; and thousands of buddhists can and do. You talk volubly about supernatural beings ("angels" and "spirits"), and about the "other world." Has any one of you the slightest practical knowledge touching either?

C. How does a man become imparadised in NIRVANA?

B. By thought. In the buddhist scripture it is plainly written,—

All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is made up of our thought. —DHAMMAPADA, v. 1.

And in one of Swedenborg's books it is written,—

It is THOUGHT which makes man of such quality as he is.—D. 364.

A very unchristian, but a genuinely buddhistic teaching. It is not church-going, bible-reading, prayers, prostrations before gods and idols, conventional morality, and the like, that make us what we are, and will be, but solely *thought*. A little reflection will show you that we are what our thoughts are, not what the world about us forces us to be. To be personal: I am not what my neighbors suppose I am. They force me to be what I appear to them; but this is not what I, the thinker, am! Swedenborg was not what you christians of the new-church sect suppose him to have been. Your misfaith has imbecillitated you too much to enable you to grasp the largeness of the real man.

I have said that Swedenborg practiced *dhyana*. He says in one place that when his mind "lapsed into thought concerning worldly things, the heavenly, or mental, realities before him, instantly disappeared.—D. 304. Thousands of buddhist ascetics can tell you the same. For, "material things distract the mind and scatter the thoughts" (*ibid.* 574), and so prevent enlightenment and spiritual rest. Our LORD vowed not to leave the foot of the bo-tree until, by thought, He should have obtained enlightenment.

With the true ascetic the concerns of the mind always overtop those of the body and the world. Hear our swedish ascetic,—

Those that are in thoughts concerning heavenly life, care nothing about corporeal and material things, but consider them of no account, and as a cloud opposed to the sun, which they at once dispel; for they love light without clouds.—D. 565.

And they dispel them by thought alone. With Swedenborg they believe that,—

All the thoughts of man should be directed to the eternally abiding.—D. 2809.

C. Does progress end with NIRVANA?

B. I have heard that the BUDDHAS advance forever, and still do not reach the state of the CAUSELESS FIRST CAUSE. Still, the supra-angelic BUDDHA-state is one of absolute peace.

The Divine Joy is Peace (H. 286).

says Swedenborg.

So much for asceticism and *dhyana*. Now hear a scripture,—

There is no DHYANA without Wisdom;
No Wisdom without DHYANA:—
He that hath both Wisdom and DHYANA,
Is in the presence of NIRVANA.

NAGARGUNA.

In the Raga-Tarangini, a chronicle of Cashmere, we read as follows,—

"When 150 years had passed by, since the holy SAKYAMUNI had completed His time in this world of sufferers, there was a Bodhisattva, who was supreme head of all the earth. This was Nagarguna, who possessed in himself the power of six Arhats."—ii. 172.

Nagarguna was born in South India, of brahmanic parents, and was educated a brahman. His conversion took place in the following manner: A travelling buddhist teacher (samanær) came one day by his residence. Seeing it nobly built and pleasantly situated amid trees and fountains, he made up his mind to get acquainted with its owner. Nagarguna, before admitting him, wanted to know whence and what manner of man he was. On his declaring himself a teacher a buddhism the door was at once closed against him. Determined not to be so easily repulsed the buddhist knocked again and again, till Nagarguna, provoked by his pertinacity, appeared on the terrace above and cried out to him,—

"It is useless for you to go on knocking. In this house is nothing!"

"No-thing!" retorted the buddhist, "what sort of thing is that, pray?"

Nagarguna saw by this answer that the man must be of a philosophic turn of mind, and was thus induced to break his rule, which forbid him intercourse with buddhists, and let him in that he might have more discourse with him.

The buddhist by degrees fascinated his mind with the whole buddhist doctrine, and ultimately told him that our LORD had left a prophecy, saying, that long years after He had departed this life there would arise a great teacher in Southern India, who by the wisdom of his teaching would renew the face of the earth; and that this prophecy he was destined to accomplish.

Nagarguna believed his words, and subsequently fulfilled them.

His peculiar school of buddhism received the name of Madhjamika, because of three prevailing interpretations of the earlier buddhist teaching he chose the one which steered its course midway —*madhjana*— between two extremes,—annihilation in the Divine Essence and conscious absorption in it.

He left his ideas to posterity in a treatise, bearing the name of Karika, consisting of a hundred thousand sections.

Nagarguna is honored almost everywhere where buddhism is honored, and his teaching still holds sway in the *higher* schools of Thibet and Mongolia.

The sagas of the thibetans and mongolians always begin with the following invocation,—

"O thou most perfect Master and Teacher of love and wisdom! Teacher, second only to the imcomparable SAKYAMUNI! Thou accomplished Nagarguna! Thou that wast intimately acquainted with the most pure Scripture *(Tripitaka)*, and didst evolve from it thy wise Middle Path *(Madhjamika)*, containing the excellent True Understanding! Before thee I prostrate myself! Hail, Nagarguna! OM!"

Near Gaja is a rock-cut temple, called Nagarguni, probably commemorating some visit of his to the shrine of the BUDDHA.

—"IN the natural world we rarely see beauty allied to usefulness."—SCHOPENHAUER.

—"ALL the ecclesiastical glue that liturgy or layman can compound, cannot solder up two incongruous natures into the one flesh of a true, beseeming marriage."—MILTON.

—"IT is necessary to swallow a toad every morning, in order not to find anything disgusting during the rest of the day, when one has to spend it in the world."—M. DE LASSEY.